THE MASTER KEY

By John Fleming Wilson

CHAPTER XXI. "Only an idol."

HEN the chest was hove on deck, dripping with ocean slime, corroded and mysterious, Harry Wilkerson stared

at it stupidly. His mind went back ooze. It stiffly stared up at him as he down the years to that night when held it, Thomas Gallon-scheming for his little daughter-had drawn a plan by candlelight, to the quarrel, to his own desperate flight and escape.

And now he was about to see for the first time the fatal paper-to know the secret of the wealth of the "Master Key." He forgot his surroundings.

It was Jean Darnell who recalled him to the present. She leaned over



Thomas Gallon and His Little Daughter.

his shoulder as he knelt, and the per changed hands for a small sum after fume of her breathed into his nostrils, much haggling. He looked up, laughed and then or- Before Wilkerson had seitled with dered the box taken aft.

she saw the flame in his eyes.

ing true?" she parried.

true," he said moodily and followed chest. the chest aft.

The curious sailors set the box down told the broken hearted Ruth, "and and waited. It was evident from their attitudes that they expected to see, nothing less than great treasure. Oth-

erwise, why this costly expedition? But Wilkerson did not start immediately to open the chest. Its very appearance seemed to bewilder him, and his hands shook. It was Jean Darnell who stirred him to activity.

"Now you've got it." she said impatiently, "hurry and open it! The other launch is chasing us?"

Wilkerson stared around and picket up a marlinspike. He began to pry a! the lock. Mrs. Darnell angrily jerked at his shoulder. "Harry, you fool, here is the key!"

He took the article she handed him and nodded. "Sure enough," he assented, "we have the key! Funny I had forgot that." With some difficulty he managed to

clear the lock and insert the key. It turned with difficulty.

A moment later he had pried the lid back from its setting of rust and slime and they were all staring at the sod-

There was no sound except the trundling of the swiftly revolving propeller and the heavy breathing of the

Suddenly Wilkerson swung round an-

grily and ordered everybody forward. Then he began his slow search. Old jackets almost disintegrated by

the action of water, pulpy papers and



Wilkerson Stared at It Stupidly. various odds and ends came to his hand. The pulp he carefully laid aside ng possibly what he was look-

"I'm afraid the plans are gone," Jean know a sailor will grab at just that

whispered. "We must find them," he snarled and crew." went on with his task.

ed that one of the sailors had indeed Halfway down he came upon a grotesque figure dripping with woody taken the image and gone uptown with it, apparently to sell it. John thanked the captain, and when he and Ruth were out of earshot he

Ruth."

mourned.

"Some sailor's curio. Well, go on. Idols den't talk."

An hour afterward Harry Wilkerson rose to his feet and kicked the scattered contents of the chest into the scup-

The idol rolled away and came to a stop upright against the bulwarks. when it presented glazed, mysterious

"No plans!" muttered Wilkerson with

"Only an idol!" laughed Jean in wild

Then her handsome face flamed with ty much," he remarked. "But I bought wrath. She turned her back con it in good faith and sold it to a Hindu temptuously on Wilkerson and stared a little while after for a rug. Maybe across the water at the launch which was pursuing them,

In the bitterness of her heart was no interest them and departed with the mingling of pity for her tool; only self | poor satisfaction of knowing that the contempt that she had depended on object of their search was in the hands

When she could control herself she rugs, who was presumably an East Inwent forward to get out of sight of dian. the mocking heap of rubbish that had "We can't do any more just now,"

Presently a sailor made excuse to "No," was the response. "But I am come aft and peered at the pile of going to keep an eye out for a Hindu junk. The idol caught his eye, and he rug seller. I don't imagine there are stealthily caught it up and hid it in very many of them here, so it ought to

"Good in a pawnshop," he chuckled. Thus once more the plans of the Ruth grew more cheerful. "At any mother lode of the "Master Key" mine | rate, Wilkerson and Mrs. Darnell missescaped from Wilkerson's filching fin- ed it," she remarked.

When the launch put into San Pedro | woman mixed herself up in this," John Mrs. Darnell did not wait for Wilker-

"I'm going to Los Angeles," she said. "You'll find me at the hotel-if you think it worth your while."

He looked up from his business of settling with the divers and made a gesture to detain her. He seemed to call out some inarticulate plea.

She merely smiled again and left. She paid no attention to one of the sailors who brushed by her, clutching This individual, once clear of the wa-

ter front, quickly made his way to a pawnbroker's shop, and the idol

the diver John Dorr's launch also "I was dreaming," he said slowly, made its landing, and the two enemies Then he looked at her directly, and would have met except that Wilkerson had to go to bank to eash a draft. "Why dream when things are com- As he slipped away he saw the other

boat and laughed bitterly. Dorr was "I wonder whether they will all come welcome to what there was in the old

"There is just one thing to do," John



"I'm going to Los Angeles," she said.

that is to find out what Wilkerson did with what he got from your father's

The captain of the other boat received them with a good humored grin and in answer to their inquiries pointed to the open box and the articles scattered on the deck.

"So far as I could make out," be went on, "there wasn't anything in the old chest worth the trouble of going after. At any rate Mr. Wilkerson and the lady seemed disappointed and put

"Didn't they take anything?" demanded Ruth, peering curiously at the moldy sea chest.

"Not a thing, so far as I could discover," was the reply. "In fact, I heard the two of them kind of quarreling, and the lady went off by her-

The three of them stared down at | But Whkerson had not given up. On the mementos of the long past trage- his return from the bank he had learn-

interest in the idol, and he had promptly followed this clew, with the result that he knew as much about its where-"What is that?" demanded John. abouts as John and Ruth did, so far "An old idol. But I'm sure neither as its getting into the hands of an of them took it" East Indian peddler was concerned. But what became of R?" John con-Whether Derr had recovered the image tinued, trying to conceal his anxiety.

"Maybe one of the men picked it up

for a curio," the skipper said apolo-

man. Our best plan is to look into the

been in to dispose of an idol.

you would like to buy a rug?"

John told Ruth.

They made it plain that rugs did not

of an unknown wandering peddler of

be an easy matter to pick him up."

As they walked back to the hotel

"I never understood just why that

"Al! sho is after is money."

said thoughtfully. "You must have

got some notion, Ruth. You were with

"Yes, I have an idea," she responded.

"I'm not sure of all the details, but

it seems Mrs, Darnell knew both fa-

ther and Harry Wilkerson in the old

"Well," she went on, blushing divine-

ly, "father didn't like Jean and

wouldn't have anything to do with her

nor allow me to either. She always

"Wilkerson is certainly in love with

"I think he is," Ruth asserted. "But

she doesn't care anything about him,

Later in the evening as they discuss-

ed the events of the day John brought

up the subject of Wilkerson's anxiety

for the papers again and recalled the

fact that old Tom Gallon had always

insisted on Wilkerson's knowledge of

"I wonder just what it was," he went

on. "If he knows just where that

rich lede is he's concealed his knowl-

edge pretty well, and the eagerness he

is showing to get hold of the plans is

"He is spending lots of money," she

sighed. "How much longer can we

keep this up. John? Surely we are

"Not so long as good old Everett

"But-maybe father was mistaken,

"Nonsense!" he said reassuringly. "I

can make the mine pay just as it

stands. But I promised your father I'd

see that you got all your rights, and he

certainly meant for you to have the

wealth hidden somewhere in the 'Mas-

"And we've lost the deeds and the

"I'll find that Hindu and his pre-

cious idol if I have to go to India," he

said promptly. "One thing-we won't

have Harry Wilkerson spoiling our

schemes. He'll give up now."

key, and we haven't found the plans,"

sticks by us," was the response.

and we can't pay it all back!"

proof that he isn't sure."

broke again?"

ter Key' mine."

I'm sure. All she is after is money."

her some time."

days and and '-

hated father after that."

her," John said presently.

"And what?"

CHAPTER XXII.

getically. "Everybody seemed to think the old thing was worthless, and you The Quest of the Hindu. HAT night Wilkerson sought kind of thing. Better ask some of the out Jean Darnell, She received him in a manner that A few moments later Dorr had learntold him distinctly that she was in a towering rage, though she was outwardly calm.

from him he did not know.

schemes have failed." said, "That idol is what we are after,

"But where can we find it?" she idoi that was in the chest?" "We must trace the sailor. Ten to one he'll try to sell it to a secondhand

eyes on Wilkerson. pawnshops, I think, Ruth," he au-"Harry," she said huskily, "I am

weary of this." The first places they visited gave up "Wait a moment," he pleaded no information of value. The third "When I went back to the launch ! pawnbroker looked at Dorr curiously found that Dorr had been quizzing the when he asked whether a man had men about that image." "That thing seems to be wanted pret-

"And I suppose he had got it." "No, he didn't. One of the sailors



"Wait a moment," he pleaded.

had picked it up and taken it to t pawnshop and sold it." She stamped her foot.

"Where is it? What has it to do with the plans?" "I don't know where it is," he re-

sponded sullenly. "A Hindu rug peddler bought it." "And Dorr bought it from him?" "Not yet," he said, risking the state-

ment. "Now all I have to do is to find Mr. Peddler and get it back." Mrs. Durnell flung herself into

hair and laughed hysterically. "You mean to tell me Tom Gallon hid his plans in a heathen idoi and that we overlooked them and that a rug peddler has them now?"

She leaned forward, clinching her soft hands on her knees.

"Do you know all you have made theft, murder-yes, murder-and at the end of it all, when we neither of us that unless they believed there was no dare breathe for fear of the police finally getting us, you tell me that a tramp has got what we want! I'm

for nothing. Without her assistance death. and her money he was helpless.

And profounder even than his hatred of Dorr and his desire for the hidden for it and set the image in the shrine. wealth was his agony at the thought where all might see and worship. of his failure to win this woman whom

Love is a noun which conveys to the ordinary mortal no definite meaning without an adjective. There is, indeed. an essence of love, a complete and all absorbing passion, before which even the gods bow and against which the world is powerless. Too often we

must describe it as lawless. Yet it also exists when it evokes the reverence of the most cynical. Wilkerson's love for Jean Darnell was the very essence of his being.

It had made a brave of a coward It had weided a dozen strands of vi | & ciousness, weakness, wickedness and treacherousness into a strong character-strong only in its relation to the



"I'm going to get that idol." The past few weeks, with their with ness, risk, crime and continual plotting, had made the Harry Wilkerson who was a weakling and sport of cir- stemachs were full the people went cumstances into a personality who away and left the prophet alone with must be dealt with.

this when he next spoke.

worth while it will make you."

scornfully, but with an effort,

the 'Master Key' mine, and the plans are concealed in that image."

"When will you have them?" she cried, trying to fight against the man's

"Tomorrow," he returned. "Even if Dorr and Ruth"-

He nodded gravely. She read the message in his eyes and shuddered. Wilkerson laughed. He had won. He had conquered not only the weman in that moment, but himself.

He was ready to do murder deliberately, without a qualm. There had been born in him another physical thirst-the blood lust.

He left immediately without uncov-Wilkerson paid no attention apparently to her blazing eyes nor to her re- ring his plans. He knew that the strained, "Well, once more your final victory would not be won until he could fill Jean Darnell's soft and "Not failed," he said boldly. "I ad- avaricious palms with glittering gold, mit we nearly passed up what we were heaps of gold, gold that ran over, that looking for. Do you remember that spilled in luxuriant streams over her clutching fingers; gold that rang under Jean stopped her nervous pacing of her feet, that mounted like an envelthe floor and fixed her great, tawny oping flood about her till her flesh was

That night he paced the floor of his room, dreaming of gold and of blood. So the maxt morning when John Dorr fared forth on life quest for the rug peddler Harry Wilkerson was not far behind him, watching his every move, studying him, trying to read what was in his mind. And all with the great question before him:

Had John Derr the idol? While timese two were seeking for the strange image of an unknown god there was a third who had found in it

the goal of his life's teil. When God conceals blusself from as in time of stress and agony, when he has closed his brazen heavens and our prayers die in the empty air it is hu man to build for ourselves a tangible God, one whom we can see and feel, into whose face we can look and before whose feet we can lay our offerings and our petitions.

In a far city in India men had died of famine. The earth had turned to iron under their plows and the heavens to brass above them.

They had implered a hundred gods for help and made offerings at a thousand shrines. There had been no respence. The smoke of the burning ghats by the side of the shrunken river told the sorry tale of prayer man-

And in their last misery men turned. as men will, to one who dreamed. Realiev was death. Dreams held out the

And this dreamer, as do all who follow a vision, made his dream into a People listened to his tale of a delig-

who was merciful to listen and powerfel to save. They fed on the dream er's words and called him a prophet. Vet still the earth refused food, and the river shrank within its bed. Then they went to the prophet and called on him to save them and to call his god

to their aid. Like many prophets, he found himself forced to materialize his dream in me go through, Harry? Kidnaplas. order that the common folk might see and believe, for he had taught them

> "How can we believe in a god whom we eranot see?" they eried.

"I helieve, though I do not see nor Wilkerson had expected and feared feet," he told them. But they were this. He saw his wild efforts going not satisfied and memored him with peared to him and spoke of death and one of your choice. No mystery is too

> So he took prefets and fire and made an incage of his god and made a shrine And the people prayed to this new god and laid offerings at his feet and



looked into his eyes and called upon

his god and his deserted shrine. Jean Darnell realized something of Yet always in time of trouble and stress they remembered the god who . A suit was filed in the Federal court "All this has been disappointing," he had saved them and returned to his in St Jouis yesterday by the First said quietly, his eyes burning steadily worship, so that in season other proph- National Bank of this city to recover

Centuries passed, and the god still maintained his place. His priesthood prospered: his temple was never empty. And one day a drunken sailer wandered into the temple to stare at the heathen wonders, and when he slipped

away the niche of the god was vacant "He has gone on a journey," said the terrified priests and concealed the theft. But the high priest sent several of his chosen acolytes throughout the world to seek for and recover the image.

"How shall we find him?" they asked. "By a path of death and destruction," was the answer.

So they set out and found the sailor who had stolen it dead in a lane with a kulfe between his shoulders. And his murderer they discovered in a Chinese seaport gaping horridly at the sky, with a rope twisted tightly about

So the image passed from hand to hand, always bringing with it death, until some sailor hid it in his chest, and when he had been washed overside in a storm and his effects were distributed a captain bought the idol for a curio.

It was in his chest that Thomas Galion had found it when seeking a safe place to hide his precious papers in time of mutiny and fire.

Now, at last, it had fallen into the hands of one of the seekers, and he took it to his little tenement room and " prayed to it and swore that he would brightest star, guarantees to succeed return it to its proper place in the tem-

There was no response from the image, but when the Indian fell asleep advice, more satisfaction, more enon his rug that night in the alien Amer-



Dorr's Dreams of Love.

ican city he dreamed that his god apdestruction yet to follow, commanding deep to solve; nothing is omitted.

him to start instantly for the east. The next day, while four was seeking for a Hindu selling russ and Wilkerson was shadowing him the new possessor of the idol was bastering to Sen Francisco to take steamer for India and the city by the river.

The image was conceased with all reverence in his bundle of rags, and he moved cautiously, because of the

Strange destiny that centered old Tom Gallen's plans for his daughter's happiness, Dorr's dreams of love, Jean Darnell's lust for wealth and Harry Wilkerson's passion for a woman without a heart in the possession of a grotesque image made by a dreamer in dreary but what PROFESSOR LEONfaroff India centuries before when a ARD can being sunshine and happicity died and a river waned within its bed.

(To be Continued.)

BANKREPT CASES HEARD

of New Madrid, was adjudicated yesterday merning by Referee Oscar A. Over Bruening Bros. Tailor Shop Knehans, and an order was issued requiring them to file schedules of their liabilities and assets within tendays. in the case of M. D. Milier, a volun- POPE REVIVES OLD CUSTOMS tary bankrupt of Senath, personal application was made yesterday to the

claims to be due him for services. Nobles and of Gentlemen of the Cape Referee Kachans Sesterday received and Sword now attend His Holiness at him to save them, as his prophet had a message by telephone from an at- audiences. The Pope also takes his torney at Salem, advising that Julien meals alone and not with his secregod of his vision, the prophet prayed Miller, trustee of the bankrupt estate tary, as did Pope Pius X. also to the spirit of the deity, and the of H. O. Schockley at Sinkin, had sold A little while ago His Holiness marrains came from the hills, and the riv- the stock of goods for \$350. The ap-

BANK SUES ON JOSEPH'S BOND the meal.

dy, and then the captain suddenly class ed from the launch captain of Dorr's went on. "I know Just two things- homage and obey his commands. | imately \$115,000 in worthless paper. of \$15,000. He is a clergyman's son.

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1 Am Located At The bankrupt estate of Mann Bros. 520a Broadway

2000年度を表現した。1000年度の第7年度

Referee by Marry Miller, brother of Rome, Feb. 6-Pope Benedict IV. is the bankrupt, for allowance of salary reviving many customs which fell in of \$75 per month from Oct. 1, 1914, abeyance during his predecessor's to January 22, 1915, which amount he reign. The full number of Guards

er rose, and the earth grew green. praised value of the stock was \$950. and gave a luncheon party for the 200 When they had been saved and their Mr. Miller is expected home today. briday guests; the Pope sat on a raised dais, apart from the others during

PASTOR'S SON IS SHORT

on hers. "But the more disappoint ets of him arose and erected a temple \$53,600 from the National Sucrey Alpha, Ill., Feb. 6-Haven Brink, ments I have to overcome the more and taught the people to bring offer. Company, which was on the bond of cashier of the Alpha State Bank, was "Quite an old time knight," she said cornfully, but with an effort.

"I are coing to a the things at an times.

"I. S. Joseph, a former cashier of the arrested this afternoon and taken to bank, Joseph died shortly after it was Cambridge, charged with misusing "I am going to get that idol," he river, with other images to do him discovered that the bank held approx- bank funds to the amount and extent